

Access and availability

Table7: Access and Availability, Bahrain GYTS, 2003

Category	Percent Current Smokers who Usually Smoke at Home CORE12A Table 10	Percent Current Smokers who Purchased Cigarettes in a Store CORE5BB Table 11	Percent Current Smokers Who Bought Cigarettes in a Store Who Were Not Refused Because of Their Age CORE10A Table 12
Total	13.4 (± 5.6)	52.4 (± 7.3)	75.3 (± 8.2)
Sex			
Male	7.1 (± 4.3)	55.9 (± 6.7)	76.7 (± 8.3)
Female	40.3 (± 16.1)	25.8 (± 13.6)	77.6 (± 23.9)

Only 13.4% of current smokers usually smoke at home and more than half (52.4%) purchase their cigarettes in stores. Almost three quarter of current smoker who usually buy their cigarettes in a store had not been refused purchase because of their age. Significantly females smoke more at home than males, also males significantly higher in purchasing cigarettes in stores than females.

Discussion

Tobacco use

The current trend is that smoking begins with teenager group, as around 80% of all the adults smokers started smoking before the age Of 18, while few of the adult begin their smoking habit as an adult .Our study confirmed this trend as the results of the study revealed that more than one quarter (28.4%) of the study group tried smoking even with one puff. It also showed that around one quarter (23.3%)of the sample who are using at least one of the tobacco products. Other tobacco consumption represents 18.2% of our sample, which we believe that sheesha consists the majority of them (it is the trend in Bahrain as people of Bahrain think that it is less harmful than cigarettes, in the contrary it is the opposite).

School curriculum

Despite the presence of the information about the hazards of smoking in the intermediate and secondary school curriculum, there was a high percentage responded that they were not taught about the dangers of smoking and did not discuss the reasons that make young people their age smokes. This may lead to the conclusion that either our school curriculum information is not well designed to address this issue, or the teachers don't properly send the message to the students. This alarms to the necessity of revising the school curriculum and to introduce them earlier.

Cessation

The indication that more than 60% of the current smokers desire to stop smoking and have actually tried to stop, dictates the urge need to establish youth- oriented counseling services and smoking cessation programs to help young smokers quit smoking.

Environmental tobacco smoke

Our teenagers are exposed to second hand smoke everywhere, at home and in the public places. As more than one third of them live in homes where other family members smoke. It is well known that the environment of smokers play an important role in encouraging young people to smoke, especially if role models like parents smoke. This shows how important to educate the community of the hazards of smoking and the second hand smoking, and to show them how the role model can help in starting or preventing smoking.

Knowledge and attitude.

More current smokers have positive attitude regarding smoking than never smokers, and more than one tenth of never smokers think that boys and girls who smoke have more friends and look more attractive. Therefore, there is an urgent need for intervention to remove these misleading and false images of smokers that are usually promoted by the tobacco industry.

Exposure to media and advertisement

Tobacco industry promoting their products in a wide different ways, this makes the young people more exposed to these advertisement which glamorize the tobacco products and leads them more likely to start smoking. The result of our study gave a clear evidence that the advertisement can reach the young population as more than 7 in ten saw pro-tobacco messages in media. This makes us to think more of controlling this type of advertisement, esp. in Bahrain where the advertisements of the sheesha are shown in newspapers and within the cafés. It is also recommended to increase the anti smoking advertisement all over the country to discourage the youth from smoking.

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Young people aged 13-15, smoking at home with or without their parents knowledge reveals the absence of a very important factor of preventing smoking. The study shows that a high percentage of females smoke at home (as smoking in the public is still culturally not accepted for females). Although the law in Bahrain forbids selling tobacco to young people less than 18, yet we see a high percentage (52.4%) purchase their cigarettes from stores and 75.3% were not stopped from purchasing because of their age. Thus we should focus more on applying the laws and to give tickets for all lawbreaker.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Tobacco industry keeps the tobacco consumption persisting despite all the effort exerted to control it. It is threatening our youth whom we depend on for our future, as starting smoking at young age increases the risk of addiction and consequently increasing the risk of death from smoking.

More than 80% of adult smoking starts before the age 18. That's why focusing the intervention programs to those people will reduce the prevalence of tobacco among adults and ultimately reduce the prevalence among adults.

The prevalence rates of tobacco use presented in this report are alarming

So we should have to:

- Increase prevention programs among the whole community to increase the awareness, so we can or reduce initiation and increase the role models for the teenagers.
- Ban smoking in all public, governmental, and private sectors to reduce exposure of second hand smoke especially sheesha.
- Revise the information fed to students through our schools curriculum, and the introduction of them earlier.
- Increase the anti- smoking advertisement and messages through the media and the public places.
- Impose the application of the law, which forbids the advertisement through the mass media (as nowadays sheesha smoking is promoted through the newspapers as part of cafes).
- Reestablish the anti- smoking clinic in Bahrain and increase the smoking cessation counseling programs.
- Impose the application of the law of not selling cigarettes to those less than 18.
- Repeat these types of studies to see the effect of intervention programs.